

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 HA-05 ACDA-12 /090 W
-----012516 260813Z /16

P 241320Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 149
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IS, EG PLO
SUBJECT: WEST BANKERS TO EGYPT, PRISONERS LIST, ETC.

1. PINCHAS GONEN, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FOREIGN MINIS-
TRY TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TERRITORIES, MADE
THE FOLLOWING POINTS IN A CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON
DECEMBER 23.

2. WEST BANKERS TO EGYPT. THE ISRAELIS NEITHER EN-
COURAGED NOR SPONSORED (FINANCIALLY) VISITS TO EGYPT
BY WEST BANK (AND GAZA STRIP) DELEGATIONS WHO WISHED
TO EXPRESS THEIR SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT SADAT. SUCH
SUPPORT WAS, GONEN SAID, PROBABLY BEING ORCHESTRATED
THROUGH THE EGYPTIAN EMBASSY IN AMMAN. THE SOLE
FUNCTION OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN THIS CONNECTION
HAD BEEN TO SCREEN LISTS OF TRAVELLERS' NAMES, NONE OF
WHICH WAS REJECTED IN THE END. GONEN SPECULATED
THAT THE REPEATED DELAYS ENCOUNTERED BY THE WEST
BANK DELEGATIONS WERE DELIBERATELY ENGINEERED BY
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THE EGYPTIANS WITH THE PURPOSE OF REDUCING THE SIZE
OF THE DELEGATION. IN HIS VIEW, THE EGYPTIAN AUTHO-
RITIES WANTED ENOUGH WEST BANK VISITORS TO IMPRESS
THE EGYPTIAN PUBLIC, BUT NOT SO MANY AS TO FORECLOSE
A RENEWAL OF BUSINESS WITH THE PLO.

3. SADAT'S PRISONERS LIST. DURING HIS JERUSALEM VISIT,

SADAT HAD RECEIVED QUITE A NUMBER OF PETITIONS FROM WEST BANKERS ASKING HIM TO INTERCEDE FOR THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS IN ISRAELI JAILS. UPON INVESTIGATION, GONEN SAID, IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT SOME OF THE PRISONERS HAD ALREADY BEEN RELEASED (AND PRESUMABLY WERE SOMEWHERE IN THE ARAB WORLD), SEVERAL HAD NEVER BEEN IN CUSTODY AT ALL, AND SOME WERE SECURITY PRISONERS WHOSE RELEASE WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION. NO ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN ON SADAT'S PETITIONS AND NONE IS CONTEMPLATED, GONEN SAID, ADDING THAT THERE MUST BE OTHER WAYS OF SENDING GOODWILL MESSAGES TO SADAT.

4. LOCAL PLO SUPPORTERS. THERE IS NOT MUCH ACTIVITY AT PRESENT BY LOCAL SUPPORTERS OF THE PLO, GONEN SAID. APART FROM A POORLY ATTENDED MEETING IN EAST JERUSALEM, A FEW CAR BURNINGS IN NABLUS, AND A CAMPAIGN OF THREATS FROM ABROAD, NOTHING HAS HAPPENED IN RECENT WEEKS. (AN ISRAELI JOURNALIST WITH GOOD CONTACTS ON THE WEST BANK AND WHO ATTENDED THE JERUSALEM MEETING GAVE US A SIMILAR ASSESSMENT: CONFUSION AND BEWILDERMENT AMONG PLO BACKERS. HE ADDED THAT RAMALLAH MAYOR KARIM KHALAF HAD BEEN PREVENTED BY THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT FROM ATTENDING THE JERUSALEM MEETING, AND THAT HE WAS TOLD BUT DID NOT BELIEVE THAT HILMI HANOUN AND FAHED QAWASMEH HAD ALSO BEEN PREVENTED. THESE TWO PREFERRED NOT TO COME, ACCORDING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO THE JOURNALIST.)

5. AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF HIS POINT THAT THE PRO-JORDANIAN MAYORS ARE BEHIND SADAT BUT BIDDING THEIR TIME, GONEN CITED RASHAD SHAWWA WHO, HE SAID, TOLD GENERAL ORLY (THE MILITARY GOVERNOR) THAT HE REGRETTED HIS DECISION TO BOYCOTT SADAT DURING HIS JERUSALEM VISIT. I WAS A FOOL, SHAWWA SUPPOSEDLY TOLD ORLY. WHEN EMBOFF EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT SHAWWA WOULD HAVE MADE SUCH A ("FOOL") STATEMENT, GONEN REPLIED THAT "SHAWWA TELLS YOU ONE THING AND US ANOTHER". LEWIS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRISONERS WELFARE, POPULATION MOVEMENTS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TELAV11074
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770481-0507
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771218/aaaaaojj.tel
Line Count: 107
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bf690efd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 130796
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WEST BANKERS TO EGYPT, PRISONERS LIST, ETC.
TAGS: PINT, IS, EG, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bf690efd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009